

Lesson 10

Jacob-Israel

Sabbath Afternoon, May 28

Jacob had chosen the inheritance of faith. He had endeavored to obtain it by craft, treachery, and falsehood; but God had permitted his sin to work out its correction. Yet through all the bitter experience of his later years, Jacob had never swerved from his purpose or renounced his choice. He had learned that in resorting to human skill and craft to secure the blessing, he had been warring against God. From that night of wrestling beside the Jabbok, Jacob had come forth a different man. Self-confidence had been uprooted. Henceforth the early cunning was no longer seen. In place of craft and deception, his life was marked by simplicity and truth. He had learned the lesson of simple reliance upon the Almighty Arm, and amid trial and affliction he bowed in humble submission to the will of God. The baser elements of character were consumed in the furnace fire, the true gold was refined, until the faith of Abraham and Isaac appeared undimmed in Jacob.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 208.

The character of God as revealed by Christ invites our faith and love, for we have a Father whose mercy and compassion fail not. At every step of our journey heavenward He will be with us to guide in every perplexity, to give us help in every temptation. . . .

He who constantly depends upon God through simple trust and prayerful confidence, will be surrounded by the angels of heaven. He who lives by faith in Christ, will be strengthened and upheld, able to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold upon eternal life.

—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 16.

It is a marvel to me that God will bear with the perversity of the children of men so long, bearing with their disobedience and yet suffering them to live, abusing His mercies, bearing false witness against Him in most wicked statements. But God's ways are not as our ways, and we will not marvel at His loving forbearance and tender pity and infinite compassion, for He has given an unmistakable evidence that this is just like His character—slow to anger, showing mercy unto thousands of those who love Him and keep His commandments. . . .

The obligations resting upon us are not small. Our sense of dependence will drive us closer to God, and our sense of duty to be performed will summon us to effort, combined with our earnest prayers—works, faith, and continual prayer. Power! Power! Our great cry is for power without measure! It awaits us. We have only to draw; to take God at His word; to act faith; to stand firmly upon the promises; to wrestle for the endowment of the grace of God. Learning is not essential; genius is not necessary; eloquence may be lacking; but the prayer of the lowly and contrite heart God hears, and when He hears no obstacles on earth can hinder. The power of God will make us effectual.

—*This Day With God*, p. 187.

Sunday, May 29: Wrestling With God

Jacob's night of anguish, when he wrestled in prayer for deliverance from the hand of Esau (Genesis 32:24-30), represents the experience of God's people in the time of trouble. Because of the deception practiced to secure his father's blessing, intended for Esau, Jacob had fled for his life, alarmed by his brother's deadly threats. After remaining for many years an exile, he had set out, at God's command, to return with his wives and children, his flocks and herds, to his native country. On reaching the borders of the land, he was filled with terror by the tidings of Esau's approach at the head of a band of warriors, doubtless bent upon revenge. Jacob's company, unarmed and defenseless, seemed about to fall helpless victims of violence and slaughter. And to the burden of anxiety and fear was added the crushing weight of self-reproach, for it was his own sin that had brought this danger. His only hope was in the mercy of God; his only defense must be prayer. . . .

. . . In the darkness and solitude he continues praying and humbling himself before God. Suddenly a hand is laid upon his shoulder. He thinks that an enemy is seeking his life, and with all the energy of despair he wrestles with his assailant. As the day begins to break, the stranger puts forth his superhuman power; at his touch the strong man seems paralyzed, and he falls, a helpless, weeping suppliant, upon the neck of his mysterious antagonist. Jacob knows now that it is the Angel of the covenant with whom he has been in conflict. Though disabled and suffering the keenest pain, he does not relinquish his purpose. Long has he endured perplexity, remorse, and trouble for his sin; now he must have the assurance that it is pardoned. . . . The patriarch exclaims, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." What confidence, what firmness and perseverance, are here displayed! . . . His was the assurance of one who confesses his weakness and unworthiness, yet trusts the mercy of a covenant-keeping God. . . .

. . . He had fastened his trembling grasp upon the promises of God, and the heart of Infinite Love could not turn away the sinner's plea. As an evidence of his triumph and an encouragement to others to imitate his example, his name was changed from one which was a reminder of his sin, to one that commemorated his victory.

—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 616, 617.

Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. . . .

The souls that turn to Him for refuge, Jesus lifts above the accusing and the strife of tongues. No man or evil angel can impeach these souls. Christ unites them to His own divine-human nature. They stand beside the great Sin Bearer, in the light proceeding from the throne of God.

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 568.

Monday, May 30: The Brothers Meet

Esau was marching against Jacob with an army, for the purpose of killing his brother. But while Jacob was wrestling with the angel that night, another angel was sent to move upon the heart of Esau in his sleeping hours. In his dream he saw Jacob in exile from his father's house for twenty years, because he was afraid of his life. And he marked his sorrow to find his mother dead. He saw in his dream Jacob's humility and angels of God around about him. He dreamed that when they met he had no mind to harm him. When Esau awoke he related his dream to his four hundred men and told them that they must not injure Jacob, for the God of his father was with him. And when they should meet Jacob, not one of them should do him harm.

—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 96.

Leaning upon his staff, the patriarch went forward to meet the band of soldiers. He was pale and disabled from his recent conflict, and he walked slowly and painfully, halting at every step; but his countenance was lighted up with joy and peace.

At sight of that crippled sufferer, "Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept." As they looked upon the scene, even the hearts of Esau's rude soldiers were touched. Notwithstanding he had told them of his dream, they could not account for the change that had come over their captain. Though they beheld the patriarch's infirmity, they little thought that this his weakness had been made his strength.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 198.

How often we feel that we have been dealt with unjustly, that things have been said concerning us that were untrue, and that we have been set in a false light before others. When we are thus tried, we shall need to keep strict guard over our spirit and our words. We shall need to have the love of Christ, that we may not cherish an unforgiving spirit. Let us not think that unless those who have injured us confess their wrongs, we are justified in withholding from them our forgiveness. We should not accumulate our grievances, holding them to our hearts until the one we think guilty has humbled his heart by repentance and confession. . . . However sorely they may have wounded us, we are not to cherish our grievances and sympathize with ourselves over our injuries, but as we hope to be pardoned for our offenses against God, so must we pardon those who have done evil to us. . . . When we are reviled, how strong is the temptation to revile in return, but in doing this we show ourselves as bad as the reviler. When tempted to revile, send up a silent prayer that God will give you His grace, and keep the tongue in silence.

—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 144.

Tuesday, May 31: The Violation of Dinah

The tarry of Jacob and his sons at Shechem ended in violence and bloodshed. The one daughter of the household had been brought to shame and sorrow, two brothers were involved in the guilt of murder, a whole city had been given to ruin and slaughter, in retaliation for the lawless deed of one rash youth. . . .

The treacherous cruelty of Simeon and Levi was not unprovoked; yet in their course toward the Shechemites they committed a grievous sin. They had carefully concealed from Jacob their intentions, and the tidings of their revenge filled him with horror. Heartsick at the deceit and violence of his sons, he only said, “Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land: . . . and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.” But the grief and abhorrence with which he regarded their bloody deed is shown by the words in which, nearly fifty years later, he referred to it, as he lay upon his deathbed in Egypt: “Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. . . . Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel.” Genesis 49:5-7.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 204, 205.

Human nature is ever struggling for expression, ready for contest; but he who learns of Christ is emptied of self, of pride, of love of supremacy, and there is silence in the soul. Self is yielded to the disposal of the Holy Spirit. Then we are not anxious to have the highest place. We have no ambition to crowd and elbow ourselves into notice; but we feel that our highest place is at the feet of our Saviour. We look to Jesus, waiting for His hand to lead, listening for His voice to guide. . . .

When we receive Christ as an abiding guest in the soul, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. The Saviour’s life on earth, though lived in the midst of conflict, was a life of peace. While angry enemies were constantly pursuing Him, He said, “He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him.” John 8:29. No storm of human or satanic wrath could disturb the calm of that perfect communion with God.

—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 15, 16.

The Son of God was appointed to come to this earth to take humanity and by His own example to be a great educating power among men. His experience in man’s behalf was to enable men to resist Satan’s power. . . . The sons of men had had a practical knowledge of evil; Christ came to the world to show them that He had planted for them the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations.

—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 33, 34.

Wednesday, June 1: Prevailing Idolatry

Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments, and let us arise, and go up to Beth-el, and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their ear-rings which were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.” And the family of Jacob never found them again. . . .

Jacob was humbled, and required his family to humble themselves, and to lay off all their ornaments, for he was to make an atonement for their sins, by offering a sacrifice unto God, that he might be entreated for them, and not leave them to be destroyed by other nations. God accepted the efforts of Jacob to remove the wrong from his family, and appeared unto him, and blessed him, and renewed the promise made to him, because his fear was before him.

—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 137.

Paul urged his brethren to ask themselves what influence their words and deeds would have upon others and to do nothing, however innocent in itself, that would seem to sanction idolatry or offend the scruples of those who might be weak in the faith. “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.”

The apostle’s words of warning to the Corinthian church are applicable to all time and are especially adapted to our day. By idolatry he meant not only the worship of idols, but self-serving, love of ease, the gratification of appetite and passion. A mere profession of faith in Christ, a boastful knowledge of the truth, does not make a man a Christian. A religion that seeks only to gratify the eye, the ear, and the taste, or that sanctions self-indulgence, is not the religion of Christ.

—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 316, 317.

The cause of God is to hold the first place in our plans and affections. There is need of bearing a straight message concerning the indulgence of self while the cause of God is in need of means. Some are so cold and backslidden that they do not realize that they are setting their affections on earthly treasure, which is soon to be swept away forever. The love of the world is binding them about, like a thick garment; and unless they change their course, they will not know how precious it is to practice self-denial for Christ’s sake. All our idols, our love of the world, must be expelled from the heart.

There are ministers and faithful friends who see the danger that surrounds these self-bound souls, and who faithfully present to them the error of their course, but instead of taking admonitions in the spirit in which they are given, and profiting thereby, those reprovéd rise up against the ones who deal with them faithfully.

—*Counsels on Stewardship*, pp. 220, 221.

Thursday, June 2: The Death of Rachel

From Bethel it was only a two days' journey to Hebron, but it brought to Jacob a heavy grief in the death of Rachel. Twice seven years' service he had rendered for her sake, and his love had made the toil but light. How deep and abiding that love had been, was shown when long afterward, as Jacob in Egypt lay near his death, Joseph came to visit his father, and the aged patriarch, glancing back upon his own life, said, "As for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath." Genesis 48:7. In the family history of his long and troubled life the loss of Rachel was alone recalled.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 206.

Humanity has in itself no light. Apart from Christ we are like an unkindled taper, like the moon when her face is turned away from the sun; we have not a single ray of brightness to shed into the darkness of the world. But when we turn toward the Sun of Righteousness, when we come in touch with Christ, the whole soul is aglow with the brightness of the divine presence.

Christ's followers are to be more than a light in the midst of men. They are the light of the world. Jesus says to all who have named His name, You have given yourselves to Me, and I have given you to the world as My representatives. As the Father had sent Him into the world, so, He declares, "have I also sent them into the world." John 17:18. As Christ is the channel for the revelation of the Father, so we are to be the channel for the revelation of Christ. While our Saviour is the great source of illumination, forget not, O Christian, that He is revealed through humanity. God's blessings are bestowed through human instrumentality. Christ Himself came to the world as the Son of man. Humanity, united to the divine nature, must touch humanity. The church of Christ, every individual disciple of the Master, is heaven's appointed channel for the revelation of God to men. Angels of glory wait to communicate through you heaven's light and power to souls that are ready to perish.

—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 40.

There is absolutely no safeguard against evil but truth. No man can stand firm for right in whose heart the truth does not abide. There is only one power that can make and keep us steadfast—the power of God, imparted to us through the grace of Christ.

Connected with Christ, human nature becomes true and pure. Christ supplies the efficiency, and man becomes a power for good. . . . Truthfulness and integrity are attributes of God, and he who possesses these qualities possesses a power that is invincible.

—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 179.

Friday, June 3: For Further Reading

Sons and Daughters of God, “Changes Us From Sinners to Saints,” p. 112;

Reflecting Christ, “Power to Prevail With God and Men,” p. 120.